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Maine CDC Flu Conference Call, Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 3:00 PM

Recommendations for Providers

It's not too late to vaccinate!

Recommendations

Prevention: Maine CDC recommends following the "No Flu 4 You" guidelines which include:

- Wash your hands: Both the general public and healthcare providers should remember to wash their hands frequently to prevent transmission of influenza
- Cover your cough: Use tissues, or cough into your sleeve
- Stay home when you are sick: Symptomatic individuals should remain home while sick. Maine CDC recommends staying home until 24 hours after fever resolves without the use of medications.
- **Get Vaccinated:** Maine CDC recommends vaccination for everyone aged 6 months and older, especially for those people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. Influenza vaccine is provided at no-cost by the state of Maine for children under the age of 19 years. Vaccine is still available through school sponsored vaccine clinics, healthcare providers, and many local pharmacies and offers protection in 14 days. For questions about vaccination please contact the Maine Immunization Program at 800-867-4775 or through immunizeme@maine.gov.

Summary National Update:

- 48 states are now experiencing widespread flu activity.
- Nationwide, there have been 29 flu related pediatric deaths.
- Flu is now spreading towards the west.
- There have been increased hospitalizations. Those over 65 continue to be the most vulnerable
- Secondary infections with bacterial pneumonia is on the rise as well as an increase in otitis media in children.
- Federal CDC recommends continuing to use antivirals. Oseltamivir and zanamivir continue to be effective while amantadine is not.

Maine Update

- Maine has experienced 132 outbreaks since the beginning of flu season including:
 - o 99 outbreaks in long term care facilities
 - o 25 outbreaks in schools.
- The Department of Education and Maine CDC sent a reminder that absences of 15% or greater are reportable to the state. Absenses should be reported through MEDMS or to Maine CDC's Disease Reporting Line @ 1-800-821-5821.
- We continue to monitor hospital bed capacity. Monitoring activities can now be reduced to every 12 hours. Thanks for your continued efforts to report.
- Continue to call Northern New England Poison Center for information on antiviral availability at:1-800-222-1222.
- Vaccine is still available.
- MaineCare has lifted the prior authorization and testing requirement prior to antiviral use during this flu epidemic.
- Hospitalizations and Emergency room visits continue to be monitored and have begun to stabilize and even
 decline in some areas.

Ouestions and Answers:

Q: How should we treat secondary infections like pneumococcal pneumonia?

A: We really need to examine the patient. Pneumococcal pneumonia is the most common secondary infection but Staph can also be involved. We need to be looking for community acquired MRSA as well. Examine the patient to see if sputum is available to make the best possible judgment.

Q: What precautions should be used with hospitalized patients?

A: Use infection control guidelines which generally call for private rooms for influenza patients and droplet precautions. Individual hospitals may need to look at their own resources and determine what will be the most effective infection prevention startgeies for their situation. Hand washing is important. Some hospitals are encouraging wearing masks. Community containment and droplet precautions are important.

Q: Will Maine CDC be tracking post infection pneumonias?

A: Only if they are reportable, such as invasive strep pneumonia. If it is not invasive, we do not require reporting.

Q: Did Maine CDC send a reminder out about today's call?

A: No. We do not plan to have another call unless there is an upswing in flu activity.

To ask more flu questions, email: flu.questions@maine.gov